Remembering Joan Frey Boytim: Reflections from Her Students and Colleagues

Matthew Hoch



Matthew Hoch

In his final contribution to the Voice Pedagogy column, Matthew Hoch pays tribute to voice pedagogue Joan Frey Boytim (1933–2024). Boytim's legacy is conveyed via the perspectives of her students and colleagues, whose lives she touched over the course of many decades of teaching in her private studio in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In addition to her local influence, Boytim impacted the profession writ large through the numerous anthologies of music she compiled for developing singers. Transcending mere commemoration, this article offers insight into Boytim's pedagogy for those who did not have the privilege of studying with her during her lifetime.

Voice teachers who specialize in teaching at the high school level are often underappreciated for the crucial role they play in forming lifelong singers. Working long hours out of their private studios in small towns and large cities, most remain uncelebrated and unsung—even though they comprise both the foundation and backbone of our profession. How gratifying it was for me, then, to sit in the banquet hall of the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile on July 11, 2016, to watch Joan Frey Boytim receive the NATS Lifetime Achievement Award.[1] In his opening remarks preceding the award presentation, then–NATS president Norman Spivey remarked, " . . . not since the *Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias* have we had anthologies that have influenced us the way that Joan's collections have."[2]

Indeed, Boytim's national legacy rests largely on the sixty anthologies of music she compiled and published through Schirmer and Hal Leonard over the course of her long lifetime.[3] In her acceptance speech, she remarked that sales of these anthologies surpassed one million at the beginning of 2015—a staggering figure despite the fact that this milestone is dated now by more than ten years.[4] Perhaps no one in the country or world was more devoted or passionate about finding appropriate music for young people to sing. However, as I developed this article (the third and last in my series honoring late voice pedagogues who have had enormous impact upon their students and colleagues), I quickly realized this list of titles and sales figures was only the tip of Joan's mammoth iceberg of identity.[5] Her consummate knowledge of developmental repertoire owed everything to her students, whom she taught and nurtured over the course of many decades out of her home in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. As I began reading their tributes, I also realized they owed everything—including their love of singing—to her.

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Joan Frey Boytim passed away on December 16, 2024, at the age of ninety-one.[6] Her memorial service at Carlisle United Methodist Church on February 16, 2025, attracted a massive gathering of family, friends, colleagues, and students, many of whom spoke and sang to pay homage to Joan, so obviously a well-beloved and towering figure in her community and beyond.[7] This article, comprised entirely of tributes written by her students and colleagues, provides insight into Boytim's lasting impact as a pedagogue, mentor, and nurturer of the human voice and spirit.

Elizabeth Aragunde

"You should be able to sing the right notes no matter what is being played!" Cluster chords underpinned the simple but firm rebuke as I stood beside the piano feeling embarrassed by my mistake. I don't remember exactly how old I was (early teens at most) nor exactly what I said. What I *do* recall was my fatal flaw: trying to partially blame my wrong notes on the piano and what may have been the only mistake I ever heard from her fingers. Joan Boytim had no time for excuses or shifting blame; she nipped that behavior in the bud as soon as she heard it.

I learned a vital lesson that day. Nearly three decades later, I still share this story with my voice students and choirs. In that moment so many years ago, I was not met with the understanding or sympathy I was hoping for but instead learned some invaluable lessons that have shaped my musical development every step of the way: There are no excuses—only personal responsibility and preparation . . . no one else is to blame for your mistakes . . . if you are truly prepared, nothing and no one will impact your accuracy. These were only some of the essential lessons learned in that impeccable living room with the green walls and carpet that became the space where the entire trajectory of my life was altered.

Mrs. Boytim did not mince words. Her instructions were direct and efficient. While compliments were not doled out generously, she gave praise when it was warranted: when a song was learned with complete accuracy (and not a moment before). Her corrections were not mean-spirited but reminded us of the highest standards she had for her singers. (She would accept nothing less.) As a young, insecure singer, however, I couldn't always see her corrections in that light. More than pointing out mistakes to show where practice was still needed, her feedback reminded us she expected better from us, because she believed we were capable of more. This "tough love" approach made Joan legendary. It was well-known in the community that if you wanted frequent or lavish praise, Mrs. Boytim was not going to be the right fit for you; however, if you wanted a rigorous approach that resulted in exceptional musicianship, there was then only one choice. Even as a twelve-year-old beginner, I knew I wanted and needed to learn from her and no one else. The path to musical excellence had no guide more knowledgeable than Joan Boytim.

From her beautifully manicured roses to the spotless living room to her impeccable manner of dress, everything about Mrs. Boytim oozed excellence, order, and meticulous attention to detail—something she also cultivated in her students. One of the most painstaking but invaluable aspects of her voice lessons was the word-for-word translations she required for each foreign-language song assigned. In a time before Google Translate and the Internet, this meant sitting on her couch with a pencil and dictionary in hand—slowly looking up each and every word. Inwardly, I relished the process; it felt like I was decoding a secret message or putting pieces of a puzzle together. Over time, this practice helped me recognize and retain words in multiple languages, and I developed the discipline of making sure I understood every word I was singing. I continue to emphasize this with my own singers and require them to write literal translations in their music. We now know that the kinesthetic approach of physically writing notes (or, in this case, translations) instead of typing them activates dozens more neural pathways and drastically enhances data retention. Although there were no studies on that at the time, Mrs. Boytim was insisting upon a quintessentially effective strategy for the comprehension and retention of information—one that would prove to be invaluable across many facets of my life.

The sheer breadth and width of the repertoire we covered in lessons over the years was astounding. While I don't remember ever being asked if I wanted to sing a particular piece, repertoire always was assigned thoughtfully, strategically, and (most important) based on where I was in my development at the time. Looking back on the songs she gave me in my earliest lessons with her, I can see how this incremental approach cultivated confidence and a sense of fearlessness when approach-

ing repertoire. Her ability to hear the voice, not just for what it was in the present but for where it was going, was unmatched.

I remember falling in love with art songs before I was in high school. When we started arias, she gave me a steady diet of coloratura repertoire; I was in heaven! As we worked on ornamentation and cadenzas, she pushed me to a level I did not know I was capable of at the time. She had complete confidence in me. Her unflinching commitment to developing my voice enabled me to play, to take risks, and learn to trust my instrument. Her extensive knowledge of repertoire for every voice type was the basis for her songbook series, an invaluable tool to all voice teachers. I was a teenager when she was working on the first volume of her "First Book of Solos" series.[8] I was flattered and excited when she tried out pieces with me to see if they would make the cut for the anthology. So many of those songs would have been lost or overlooked without her careful work collecting and publishing them. What a debt of gratitude we owe to her.

To be perfectly honest, Mrs. Boytim both inspired and intimidated me in equal measure. I was terrified of disappointing her—but not because she was ever unkind; she was a tour de force, and I wanted to be worthy of her time and tutelage. I began to see another side of her in my adult years as I taught and performed professionally. I would occasionally have the privilege of performing alongside her for the Carlisle Musical Arts Club and other local events. Though I had aged out of her studio many years prior to these performances, she continued to speak to me and of me with genuine pride and care. She was proud of her students and followed the details of their lives and careers decades after they were no longer taking lessons. There was warmth in her tone as she spoke about her students and a sparkle in her eye I had not noticed or appreciated when I was younger. I loved collaborating with Joan as an adult because I gained a new perspective: her warmth and humor were so apparent and it was a more relaxed dynamic—as if we were equals. She made a conscious effort to keep up with my career, my kids, and my personal life. Joan would seek me out and sit with me when she attended performances at Dickinson College, and she would ask questions about my life with an astonishing memory for details.

Joan taught me many invaluable lessons, but one of the conversations that impacted me most profoundly was not about music or singing but rather something much more intimate: Years ago I went to Mrs. Boytim's house to rehearse for a performance for Carlisle Musical Arts Club; she had agreed to accompany me on the piano. I was well into my thirties—at this point with two children and a busy career—and our dynamic had become more friendly and relaxed. At the end of our rehearsal, she shared a bit with me about her life and decision not to have children. In all my years as her student, she had never said anything about her personal life until that moment. I had no knowledge about where she was from, her family, or anything else outside of her studio, so this conversation was a marked contrast; I was humbled she was sharing this information about herself with me. The intimacy and vulnerability of her sharing the reason for her decision not to have children was profound, and it must have been an agonizing choice for her beloved husband Jim and her to make. With no children of her own, she dedicated herself to her students as if they were her children. She unfailingly guided, corrected, challenged, and encouraged us in every step of our musical journeys. Sharing this personal story with me made me look back on my years with her and see things differently and through a mother's perspective.

That same day I stood in her living room chatting, the conversation led to her sharing some of the many things she was doing that summer—which was a dizzying list! I laughed and asked how she managed to do it all, especially at her age. I will never forget her beautiful response: "It's because of Jim. I couldn't do any of what I do without him. After we decided to not have children, we made the commitment to support each other every step of the way. That is the only way I could do what I do. None of this would be possible without his support. He sacrificed a lot for me. It is essential to find a spouse who supports you like that." Her face beamed when she talked about Jim. She was so proud of him, and he had equal admiration for his bride. He was there at every recital, every event, every conference, every musical obligation, and he drove her everywhere she needed to be. I responded to her beautiful words about Jim by saying her next publication needed to be a book about how to have a successful marriage; I felt she needed to share their love story. I often think back on that conversation

and remember her words about making sacrifices for and supporting your spouse—something that I strive to emulate in my own marriage. Little did she know the impact that simple exchange from years ago would have upon me.

Joan continues to be part of my everyday life, and she always will be. I use her books and warm-ups in nearly every lesson and her "inner smile / bite the apple" technique is a constant presence in my singing and my teaching. From word-for-word translations to "carding" a song as an intermediate step to memorization to learning how to roll *r*'s, the lessons I absorbed from her are passed on to my students every day. The highest compliment I could have received from Mrs. Boytim was when she sent voice students to me, especially as she was near the end of her life and decided to finally stop teaching. Entrusting me to carry on her legacy and her level of instruction was deeply meaningful to me and I strive to uphold her standards in my own teaching. Her legacy lives on through all her former students who pass her techniques to their students—a lineage that will continue for generations.

What a privilege to have studied under Mrs. Boytim, to have known her in my adult years, and to honor her with these words. Her shoes are too big to be filled by one person (nor should they be), but they will be filled in ways big and small by thousands of singers and teachers across the globe and passed on to their students and audiences. There could be no greater legacy for a teacher than this, and there could be no greater teacher than Joan Boytim. May we all honor her through our music and our teaching and remember the tremendous debt of gratitude owed to her.

Michelle Duggan (and family)

We once asked Joan how many students she had over the course of her almost seventy years as a voice instructor, and she estimated over two thousand. Of that number, a large percentage proceeded to become opera singers, Broadway performers, college and university music professors, music teachers in elementary and secondary schools, private voice instructors, orchestral conductors, and other kinds of performers. It is for this reason that we—a family of nonprofessional, hobbyist musicians—are humbled to be included in this tribute to Joan Frey Boytim.

Musically, we are indebted to Joan for so much. She instilled within us an appreciation and love for music that will endure for the remainder of our lives. Of course, we (like all Boytim students) are eternally grateful to her for having taught us the "Boytim vocal technique"—the lift in the nose through "biting the apple," approaching vocal leaps by ensuring that the note prior to the high note has open space, and "diction, diction, diction." Additionally, we are deeply appreciative to Joan for making the connections to allow our post-Joan study to be with members of the greater "Boytim family"—namely with Dr. Susan Hochmiller, Mr. Jeffrey Fahnestock, and Dr. Elizabeth Aragunde—all of whom are carrying out Joan's legacy through the exceptional vocal instruction they provide to countless students.

Joan's reputation as a private voice teacher, prolific publisher of vocal anthologies, benefactor of the Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers, and recipient of the 2016 NATS Lifetime Achievement Award, are well-known to the readers of this publication.[9] Therefore, as nonprofessional musicians, we wish to dedicate our tribute to the priceless life lessons Joan exemplified for us. Many of these became apparent to us through Joan's instruction of my youngest daughter, Marabeth Duggan. Marabeth was Joan's last high school student, and she continued to teach her until a year and a half before her passing. This experience of having Joan as a teacher later in her life was a treasured gift to our family, as we were able to witness first-hand Joan fulfilling her motto of "aspiring to inspire until one expires." Moreover, we gained an opportunity to spend special time with Joan after each of Marabeth's lessons as we took her for dinner and assisted her in running her errands. During these cherished times, Joan reminisced about her life. As a result, we were able to discover the nonmusical (but equally extraordinary) side of Joan. We wish to share these remarkable and perhaps lesser-known aspects about her, as they epitomize the hardworking, generous, caring, and fun-loving individual Joan Frey Boytim was.

Joan . . . A Lesson in Devotion to Lifelong Learning

Anyone who knows of Joan's reputation immediately recognizes her lifelong devotion to the study of music. As she related in her speech accepting the 2016 NATS Lifetime Achievement Award, Joan started her music instruction at the age of four and pursued varied instru-

mental studies, including clarinet, kettle drums, and violin, before landing upon her preferred instrument of the French horn, of which she excelled.[10] She also was an exceptional accompanist, a skill that assisted her greatly in vocal instruction. A gifted vocalist and soloist in her own right, she nonetheless believed her mission in life was to teach—especially adolescent students. Joan would often say that although she and her beloved husband Jim did not have any biological children, her voice students *were* her children. That desire to offer all that she could to her students sparked Joan's ongoing desire to learn more about vocal instruction and repertoire, which eventually paved the way for her to compile the vocal anthologies that have served as a bedrock of learning for a generation of voice students.

Joan was fiercely motivated to ensuring she provided as much tailored, individual instruction as she could to develop the unique skills of each of her students, and she endeavored to pursue whatever knowledge and exert whatever effort she needed to accomplish that task. Several examples of Joan's undertakings in this vein come to mind. First, from having attended prior NATS conventions, she learned about color sensitivity dyslexia (scotopic sensitivity or "Irlen" syndrome) and then used this knowledge to assist several students afflicted with this condition by providing them various colored glasses to wear (which enabled them to better read music). Additionally, her commitment to offering her students opportunities for advancement continued throughout her entire career of teaching, including when (in 2021) she volunteered to play piano for us in a family voice recital. Thus, at eighty-eight years of age, Joan accompanied our family in a ninety-minute performance—with no break!

Joan's dedication to lifelong learning did not end with music, however. Joan's academic and artistic curiosity was vast and insatiable. She was a talented artist with skills that rivaled her talents as a musician. She painted throughout her life, amassing a large library of original artwork. She created artwork for each of her choral programs while serving as a high school music teacher at Carlisle Area High School as well as for her annual Christmas cards. So detailed and impressive were her artistic skills that she was recruited by two local physician friends to complete anatomical drawings for textbooks they were publishing.

Whatever endeavor Joan sought to learn about, she was resolute in pursuing that initiative to her fullest abilities. That is why Joan became an expert seamstress, making professional-level curtains, dresses, and suits. She was a master gardener who prided herself on once not having to buy potatoes for five years due to her excellent yield. Moreover, her love of gadgets and her "do-it-yourself" philosophy made her excited when she found the perfect tool for ridding her yard of weeds; she designed her own "grabber" to obtain items that she could not reach and bought various household items in catalogues she thought could assist her friends with their tasks. She was also keenly interested in investing and frequently checked the stock market application on her iPad. Reading the local and national newspapers daily was a high priority for Joan, such so that when (only a year or so before her death) her local newspaper advertised a survey about a friend's restaurant she wished to respond to—but required a QR code—she was insistent upon learning how to use QR codes to ensure she registered her opinion. Joan also prided herself on completing her federal income taxes on her own, without any assistance, right up until the last few years of her life. In sum, Joan was the quintessential Renaissance person.

Yet, for all of the admiration my family and so many others had for Joan's devotion to lifelong learning and her achievement in so many areas, Joan herself was never affected by her success. To the contrary, a product of the Great Depression, Joan's commitment to learning, doing for oneself and others, and hard work were simply self-expectations and nothing to be lauded. Indeed, for every award or accolade she received, Joan seemed incredulous she would be worthy enough to be selected for that honor. That is the true lesson of Joan's devotion to lifelong learning in music and so many other areas. She did so with humility, without pretense, and simply because she wished to "aspire to inspire until one expires."

Joan . . . A Lesson in Charitable Service

Some of the most poignant times our family shared with Joan was when she recalled how she met and married her beloved husband, Jim. Theirs was a true love story, and we would often kiddingly tease her that her courtship with Jim was a plot for a Hallmark movie. She would smile and willingly acknowledge it was "love at first

sight," professing she knew immediately upon meeting him he would be her husband. Jim and Joan were a true partnership. They looked after each other, supported each other, and collaborated with one another. Jim proudly handed out programs at Joan's students' voice recitals and consistently attended NATS conventions with her. Likewise, when Jim had to travel for continued doctoral studies or check in with his collegiate student interns, Joan would travel with him. Joan, in fact, relates in her NATS Lifetime Achievement Award speech that it was during these trips to accompany Jim in his professional travel that she went to various music stores to explore and chronicle works of musical literature that would later comprise her vocal anthology books.[11]

Perhaps their most significant collaboration, however, was their philanthropic work. Jim and Joan were extraordinarily generous, creating scholarships in their respective disciplines at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), their alma mater. Additionally, they contributed to multiple philanthropic causes in their Carlisle community, including their church (Carlisle United Methodist), a local Samaritan Purse chapter, Habitat for Humanity, free-health clinics, and numerous other charities. Of course, Joan sponsored the NATS Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers beginning in 2015 and has been the benefactor of scholarships for the Carlisle Musical Arts Club for students from the Carlisle area seeking a college education in a field of music.[12]

Both Jim and Joan were generous philanthropists in their own right who aimed to give back to their faith, their profession, and their community. Together, however, they were a philanthropic force that championed improving the well-being of those in their community. Joan was especially sympathetic to the need to give others a second chance. She loved the efforts of one of the charities to which she donated that assisted young women who were striking out on their own by providing them clothes for job interviews. Additionally, a few years ago, during one of Marabeth's lessons, Joan's propensity toward service was on vivid display. She was visibly upset about a local apartment complex that had burned down, leaving many residents destitute, and was trying to discern how she could help. On another occasion, when a local restaurateur who Joan befriended was in jeopardy of losing her business, Joan stepped in to provide financial assistance. All these instances and countless others confirmed that where there was need, there was Joan—ready to give and to help in any way that she could. Joan never wanted recognition for her giving, however. Rather, she firmly believed it was her duty to serve her community; her servant's heart was inspirational.

Joan . . . A Lesson in Living a Full Life

When contemplating her music, art, gardening, sewing, stock trading, charitable giving, and religious faith, there can be no denying that Joan lived a full life. However, Joan enjoyed a whole host of other interests. She delighted in swimming and was a member of the local Carlisle Swim Club until just a few years before her life ended. She frequently went to movies, lunch, and dinner with friends. She loved basketball and was an avid Stephen Curry fan, watching Golden State Warriors games as often as she could. In short, Joan epitomized how to live a full life, filled with a plethora of interests and many cherished relationships.

So, "With a Song in Our Heart," we commemorate the passing of Joan Frey Boytim, our teacher, mentor, and friend.[13] Her impact upon our family's life has been immeasurable. She was a tremendous music teacher, a treasured friend, and a role model whose example will be forever meaningful to us. Wherever our future paths may bring us—with whatever joys or difficulties—Joan has given our family life lessons and, importantly, the healing power of music. Whenever we sing, we will think of her and ask ourselves, "How Can We Keep from Singing?"[14] That is the blessing that Joan Frey Boytim has been to us.

Jeffrey Fahnestock

I was a shy fifteen-year-old when I walked into Joan Boytim's home studio for an audition in 1976. Several of my friends were taking lessons with the formidable "Mrs. B," and I decided to give it a try. I had been singing baritone in the school choir for two years and had sung a featured solo at the December concert. Mrs. Boytim (it was years before I called her Joan) heard me sing a song I had learned and said, "You are *not* a baritone. You are a tenor. I am calling your choir director and telling him to move you to the tenor section next year." So, I began studying with her for a six-week summer session. Joan's style was formal, exacting, demanding, and (most important) honest. She was not one to give idle

compliments; we were there to work. And she was right about me being a tenor: I sang a high B in the following winter's recital! My lessons with Joan continued for two school years and several summers after that.

Joan asked (more like insisted) that I join the church choir in which she and her husband Jim sang. At seventeen, I sang a "Comfort ye" in the annual community *Messiah* concert. More important, I heard Joan present a masterful "But Who May Abide the Day of His Coming" with stunning melismatic singing. Later, she asked me to play the two arias from *Samson et Delilah* for her to practice before a performance with a local orchestra. We were slowly becoming colleagues. In the midst of my graduate school years, we performed Bach's *Magnificat* and I got to sing a duet with Joan! In 1987, she was asked to sing the role of the Principessa in Puccini's *Suor Angelica*; I was Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* in the double bill. She asked my advice on how to prepare and admitted her fear of making her staged operatic debut at fifty-four. As you can imagine, Joan had learned and memorized the role a month before rehearsals began. She was truly fearsome in this performance and the show was a great success.

Several other memories come to mind. In 1978, two schoolmates and I accompanied Joan and Jim to Philadelphia for regional NATS auditions at Temple University. She presented her first lecture on teaching and assigning repertoire for young voices, using us for demonstration. Jim was in the front row with a stopwatch to keep her on time. I sang duets, trios, and my first staged operatic scene with fellow students of Joan's. I was also the last lesson she taught in the afternoon and she often gave me extra time. When we ran late, Joan at some point would jump up from the piano to turn on the PBS *Nightly Business Report* to check on how the stock market did that day. Penny stocks were her fun and profitable pastime. I also remember Joan had a passion (some might say an obsession) for sheet music. She would spend days at far-flung music stores searching through storerooms and basements for treasures. When I came home from college, I was thrilled to sift through her stacks of music and discover unheard-of gems.

I feel extremely fortunate to have had Joan Boytim as my first voice teacher. I not only learned the value of concentrating on basic skills and musicianship but also found the joy of discovering new and forgotten repertoire. I learned the value of thorough preparation and the confidence it imparts. She taught me to keep learning and sharing. And I learned to be honest with my students and not offer hollow praise. During the decades she heard me perform, Joan never hesitated to offer a critique of my technique or voice her dislike of the modern music I sang. As our relationship transitioned from teacher/student to colleagues to friends, I shared many meals and gossip sessions on the back porch and at NATS auditions (with whispered comments in German). With the national recognition she eventually received from the successful Schirmer and Hal Leonard books, Joan was invited to give presentations and master classes around the country. Joan had mellowed a bit by those years and she admitted that in master classes that she "tried to say something nice first." That never happened when I was a student!

Doug Heineman

My original encounter with choral music was on my first day as a student at Carlisle High School. The college preparatory program in which I was enrolled required either a music (chorus band) or an art elective. I didn't play an instrument and couldn't draw straight lines, so choir was my only option. This was my first encounter with Joan Fry Boytim. She accepted me into her program, which began with an all-male ensemble in tenth grade before proceeding to the mixed choir of eleventh and twelfth graders. Under her guidance and perseverance, learning to read and sing music became an obsession for all of us. Not one person comes to mind who didn't enjoy choir every day under her direction. In addition, Mrs. Boytim would offer us one-on-one voice lessons. Everyone who participated became a much better vocalist, and the choir benefited greatly from her guidance. We were proud to be part of the Carlisle High School choir community.

I left Carlisle in June of 1964 upon enlisting in the Navy. In those days, each naval district had an choral ensemble called the Bluejacket Choir. I was elected to participate with that group in boot camp and am more than positive that the reason I was selected was because of Mrs. Boytim's guidance during those three years of high school.

Over the past several decades, Joan and I sang in several groups together; Cantate Carlisle was one of these groups. Carlisle has combined local choirs to

sing Handel's *Messiah* every year for four decades, and I sang alongside Joan during those performances too. I have also sung with the Harrisburg Opera Association, Chambersburg Chorale, Harrisburg Choral Society, and several church choirs. My love of choral music started at the very beginning with Mrs. Boytim; she deserves full credit for this important facet of my life. *Gracias* and *vaya con Dios*.

Susan Hochmiller

As singers and teachers, our pedagogy is like the branches of a tree, and each branch represents different instructions we have received, perspectives we have learned, or experiences we have had. Our roots, however, are shaped by our first voice teacher, and I could not be prouder that mine were cultivated by Joan Boytim. An attentive gardener, metaphorically and literally, she was unrelenting in her high expectations and assiduous care of what could be nurtured with a healthy foundation. When I began voice lessons at age fourteen, Joan knew that beginning with progressive method books—including those by Vaccai, Concone, Lütgen, and Marchesi—would fortify a bedrock of technique and musicianship. When we got to the end of each, she said, unfailingly, "back to the beginning!," and we sang through every exercise a second time. Mrs. B., as her students fondly called her, was discerning in her assignment of repertoire, and every week brought new songs to sight-sing, learn, "card," and memorize. This cycle created consistency in the learning and memorization process, reinforcing musical fluency and self-discipline in all vocal seasons. Joan also understood the value of performances at competitions and biennial studio recitals as she and her students shared mutual pride in displaying blooming voices in various stages of growth.

I respected and valued Mrs. B. as an authority and trusted mentor throughout my life, but it wasn't until after our student-teacher chapter ended that she became a friend. Maintaining professional boundaries with her students was important to Joan, from her demand for punctuality to the outfits she wore, and her teaching philosophy was guided by the spirit of *meliora*—always striving to be better. This rigor, however, was complemented by genuine care and support for her students. My relationship with Mrs. B. was lifelong; she attended my high school musicals, recitals, and wedding, and I made annual visits to her home. Our mail correspondence lasted for over twenty years and I've saved each treasured letter, composed in her distinctive cursive. I was deeply honored she agreed to write the foreword for my book, as she was the one who first fostered my love of vocal chamber music and inspired my doctoral lecture recital on the pedagogical value of duets.[15] I am not sure you could ask for more from your first voice teacher than to have her influence woven throughout the fabric of your life.

Mrs. B. built a legacy that her family of students cherish in equal measure; a shared experience of impactful instruction with honest feedback, uncompromising standards, supportive guidance, and the genuine desire that we all "keep singing!" regardless of career path. She understood that demanding excellence would motivate her students to have higher expectations for themselves, something that would result in enduring musicianship and self-confidence. She is with me every day in my teaching and singing as I use the same exercises she championed, methods she employed, and repertoire she anthologized. Joan Frey Boytim dedicated her life to teaching and her memory will be honored with every use of her vocal resources, which will continue to inspire future generations of singers.

Christina Kay

When I auditioned for Joan Boytim's voice studio in ninth grade, I had no idea I would be meeting one of my most treasured mentors and friends. What I do remember is feeling very serious about my lessons, because I knew I could get kicked out of Joan's studio at any time if I didn't meet the Boytim standard!

After a few weeks of working with Joan, I quickly learned what that standard meant. Her approach was organized and no-nonsense. She gave us all a detailed sequence of technical exercises. First came a single-page sheet of vocalizes designed to build foundational technique. Once you mastered that, it was on to the Marchesi book—a series of increasingly complex drills. Next came Vaccai, a lovely collection of melodies that incorporated various musical gestures. (These were my favorites, and twenty years on I am still fondly singing through them as part of my practice routine.) On top of all that, she would have us working on two to three pieces at a time, often assigning new songs even though

we had only had the "old" ones for a week or two. The amount of repertoire I was exposed to under her guidance was in hindsight astronomical. At the time, it all felt normal; Joan simply set a high bar.

With these expectations in place, I'll never forget my nerves during a lesson after a week of inconsistent practice. Joan wouldn't hesitate to tell you if you weren't ready to move on from an exercise or song. If it was clear you hadn't practiced, she would stop you and say, "This isn't ready. We'll have to do it again next week," often with a subtle sigh and a tone of disappointment. She was never unkind, but she didn't sugarcoat her feedback either. I never wanted to face that small head shake and grimace so characteristic of a displeased Joan and was always relieved if I was able to end a lesson without prompting it.

While her passion lay in her teaching, Joan's investment in us as students extended far beyond our high school years. When I went off to college to study music, she invited me (as she did all her students) to keep in touch. I still have a box full of her letters. We wrote to each other for many years, including through my graduate school studies in Wisconsin and my move to New York City to pursue a career as a singer. In her later years, writing became harder for her. Her graceful penmanship became shaky, and she eventually told me she could no longer write but would welcome a call. So I called three or four times a year. She asked how my career was going, how my family was doing, and whether I was dating anyone. She never passed judgment about my life choices—only inquired about them with genuine curiosity—and was always thrilled to hear I was still singing. She would share with relish what some of her other students were up to—her enjoyment in all our successes was apparent.

There's more I could say, but the long and short of it is that I feel lucky to be a part of the vast Boytim legacy. When I think of the kind of person I want to be and the kind of life I want to live, I often think of Joan: an entrepreneur, a loyal friend, a dedicated educator, and a person who lived every aspect of her life with honesty, excellence, and intention.

Larry Loh

Joan and Jim Boytim were cherished family friends for many years. As a child, I fondly associated their visits to our home with the French chocolate mints they always brought with them. I knew, of course, that Mrs. Boytim was a voice teacher of some renown, but at the time I hardly considered myself a singer—I was immersed in serious studies of the clarinet and piano from an early age. Years later, while a freshman at the University of Rochester as a biology major, I happened to hear one of the school's a cappella groups, the Yellowjackets, and was immediately determined to join them. After an unsuccessful audition my freshman year, I realized how much I had to learn about my voice.

Beginning that summer, I spent many mornings at Mrs. Boytim's house learning to breathe properly, working through the *Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias*, and building a foundation that would ultimately change my life. I still vividly remember those mornings: the quiet discipline of our lessons followed by stepping outside into the beautiful gardens that surrounded her home; they were an extension of her artistry—full of care, patience, and joy. Those voice lessons were a critical part of my journey toward becoming the professional orchestra conductor I am today.

I eventually spent a few wonderful years singing with the Yellowjackets, an experience I loved so much I pursued a master's degree in choral conducting at Mrs. Boytim's husband's alma mater, Indiana University, followed by an orchestral conducting degree from the Yale School of Music. Yet beyond degrees and titles, Mrs. Boytim propelled me toward something even greater: She made me a singer in the truest sense of the word. My understanding of the voice has been the cornerstone of my approach to conducting orchestras professionally, whether I was in front of the great ensembles of Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Dallas, or Seattle. Every instrument in the orchestra, at its heart, seeks to emulate the human voice through breath, phrasing, tone color, or vibrato. Mrs. Boytim's teaching gave me not only the technique but the deep, intuitive confidence to hear and shape music in this way. I know without a doubt I would not stand on the podium today with the understanding and connection to music I have if not for the guidance and generosity of Mrs. Boytim. Her impact lives on every time I take a breath and lift my baton.

Hannah O'Donnell

The first clear memory I have of Mrs. Boytim was at my older brother's high school voice recital. I must have

been about seven years old. My mother had two bouquets of flowers: one for my brother and another for his voice teacher, Mrs. Boytim, who had accompanied him on the piano. I remember I made my sister give Mrs. Boytim her flowers because I was afraid of her.

A few years later, my mother suggested my sister and I take voice lessons. We pulled up to Mrs. Boytim's house and went inside. The first things that struck me were (first) how green the living room was and (second) the picture of a little boy on the wall; how well I would get to know his face! Mrs. Boytim was much less intimidating this time. When it was time for my lesson, she had me sing and then pulled out a pencil. She started comparing my voice to the two ends of the pencil. "Right now," she told me, "you're singing more like the eraser end. I want you to sing more like the point." I didn't really know what she was talking about, but imagined this idea in my head. Judging by Mrs. Boytim's and my mother's reactions, this directive must have made a difference.

I sang lots of songs during my time studying with Mrs. Boytim. Sometimes, she would tell me about things from her life that my songs reminded her of. There was one song, "The Singer" by Michael Head, that reminded her of an old man with a worn she had seen walking along a country road in Germany. Another time, I was singing Romberg's "Song of Love" and she told me about a time she had sung that song as a child and about a pretty blue dress she had worn.[16] It was not all reminiscing, however. I remember countless hours of solfeggio, which I did not understand the importance of at the time. When I sang a wrong note we would stop, go back, and try again until I was able to sing it correctly. Mrs. Boytim required us to memorize our songs and part of that process was writing the words down on index cards so you could sing without looking at the music. Then you would eventually set aside the index card and sing the song from memory. I can still remember many of the songs I learned with Mrs. Boytim thanks to that method. Mrs. Boytim never allowed me to use copies of music; she always had me purchase books or song sheets. Because of that I have quite a collection today. (In preparation for writing this tribute I was going through my songbooks and surprised myself at how much repertoire I remembered.)

I did not sing pop songs in Mrs. Boytim's studio. The closest I came to that was through selections from *The First Book of Broadway Solos* (parts I and II).[17] But because I had to learn older songs, I had the opportunity to make the song my own rather than imitate someone else. This was one way Mrs. Boytim had us (her students) find their own unique voice. The songs we learned were like little treasures nobody else knew about—at least not from my generation. To this day I'll find myself humming "April Showers" by Louis Silvers or "Wake Up" by Montague Phillips on a spring day.[18]

As students at Mrs. Boytim's studio, however, we were not permitted to keep our music to ourselves. It was important to Joan to share our gift. So, she frequently found us opportunities to perform in the community. There were two recitals every year and occasional solos at the early service at her church. In preparation for recitals, Mrs. Boytim used to tell me (after "stand up straight," "don't let your eyes wander while you are singing," "take bigger breaths," etc.) to "just enjoy it!" At the time, I never quite understood how I was supposed to do that—I used to get so nervous I would feel sick to my stomach beforehand!—but I did come to enjoy those experiences. I remember one recital in particular where I sang a song about a young lady asking a daisy if her love were true. I had a daisy for a prop (at Mrs. Boytim's suggestion) and at the end of the song—when the daisy appeared to say the love was *not* true—I got to throw the daisy at the audience!

I've come to realize how helpful it has been to have had those recital experiences. There are a lot of intimidating things we have to do in life, but if we can stand up and sing in front of a room full of people a lot of other hard things pale in comparison. In my work as a nurse, there have been many times I have walked into a hospital room to find myself surrounded by friends and family members of the patient, all watching every move I made as closely as a hawk and paying closer attention to my every move than the audience of a Broadway musical to the lead on stage. (Let me tell you . . . that can be intimidating!) However, thanks to Mrs. Boytim's recitals, I had sung songs looking straight into the eyes of a room full of people who were also watching my every move. Thanks to Mrs. Boytim's training, I can take on anything.

My mother texted me the day Mrs. Boytim died to break the news to me. On the way home from work, I pulled over and had a good cry. Some friends of mine were going Christmas caroling at a local nursing home that night, and though I had not been intending to go

with them, I remembered that joy of sharing music. So that night, I shared my voice, the voice Mrs. Boytim had helped to mold, to glorify God and love my neighbor. That night, to honor Mrs. Boytim, I sang.

Julie Richwine

Joan Frey Boytim was one of the most influential people in the musical community of our little town of Carlisle. She was involved in all the musical activities in town, but her influence was certainly not limited to our town only. I first became aware of Joan when I sang in our church choir; one of the ladies in the choir had started taking lessons from Joan to improve her voice. My sister also sang in the choir with me. I was, I believe, a junior in high school. My sister was older, out of school and working when we both auditioned to become students of hers.

Joan primarily taught high school students, who would often continue on toward a musical career. I was a little different; I went to college for a year and then returned home to become one of Joan's adult students (alongside my sister). Even though Joan's main focus was her younger students, she provided many opportunities for her adult students too. She provided recital opportunities for us and arranged for us to be soloists in various local settings. As a prominent member of the community, Joan provided soloists for her church on Sunday mornings and encouraged us to join the Carlisle Musical Arts Club and the Carlisle Community Choir, who performed an annual production of Handel's *Messiah* at the beginning of each December. She encouraged us to join local choral groups and participate in the musicals that were part of Carlisle Summerfair, a huge three- or four-day event at the beginning of each summer.

In addition to getting her students involved in music, Joan kept herself involved in her own musical endeavors. She sang in her church choir and the *Messiah* choir and was extremely active in the Carlisle Musical Arts Club. She compiled numerous anthologies (which her students used inexhaustibly) as well as a book on how to run a private voice studio.[19] One of her passions was helping other teachers become successful at teaching voice. Joan was an accomplished musician and accompanied all her students at lessons and recitals. She was also a gifted French horn player.

Joan was very passionate about NATS. She joined the association in 1964 and attended her first conference in 1966. She attended every conference (until the post-pandemic era, when her waning health prevented her from doing so), was a regular presenter at workshops, and encouraged other teachers to join the organization. She described herself, both in person and in writing, as being "Nuts about NATS."[20] In 2016, she was awarded the NATS Lifetime Achievement Award.[21]

Joan's motto was "aspire to inspire until you expire"—and that's exactly what she did. Her life was devoted to students of voice and teachers of singing. Our little town of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, is forever blessed and enriched because of Joan Frey Boytim. Her love and legacy will live on through those of us lucky enough to have known her and learned from her. And she is sorely missed. I know I will think of her often and reflect upon the ways she has touched my life and the lives of those with whom she came in contact. Godspeed, Joan. You have inspired us, and we are all the better because of it.

Brenda Smith

"Her heart was like a singing bird."[22]

I am forever grateful to Judith Nicosia, a trusted mentor and colleague at Westminster Choir College, who advised me to introduce myself to Joan Frey Boytim. It was 1983, and I had accepted my first full-time teaching appointment at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Judith knew that Joan Boytim maintained an immensely successful private voice studio in the same town. As I remember it, she declared Joan was a "force with which you will *want* to contend."

Those were true and thoughtful words. In response to my introductory correspondence, I received the first of many invitations to enjoy food, drink, and lively conversation with the Boytims at their cozy nest on Glendale Street. In spring and summer, our gatherings included a perusal of the massive vegetable garden in progress. Meals in autumn and winter concluded with tours of the canned produce in the cellar. I doubt there were ever any better tomatoes in Pennsylvania! Upon our first encounter, I knew that I was in the presence of a community leader, a loyal spouse, and a dedicated teacher. Over the many decades, Joan and her beloved husband, Jim, grew to be my dear friends and colleagues. Joan would be proud to add that she was the matchmaker

who identified the man I would marry. She was especially glad that she was the one who introduced us to each other at a regional NATS meeting in Annville, Pennsylvania.

Over the years, Joan and I sang together at college events, shared insights about voice teaching, and attended one another's student recitals. After I left Carlisle, Joan continued to send me annotated programs of her student recitals with my holiday greeting card. I smile when I recall a luncheon with Joan in 1991. She invited me to discuss a publishing project. It was no secret Joan possessed a massive knowledge of repertoire. Annually, she purchased countless copies of sheet music she insisted her students should own. Copyright law violations were repugnant to her. She had received an offer to assemble an anthology series. At the time, she was skeptical. She said, "It seems like a great idea, but do you think it will sell?" (As we know, that "First Book of Solos" series and its associated publications have sold well over a million copies.)[23] It also was not long before she began the handbook that revealed her priceless experience in the private voice teaching business.[24] It was a true labor of love in which she immersed her younger private studio colleagues in the nuts and bolts of daily challenges and strategies. Joan returned the financial advantages of these projects to the organization that had made her work possible: the National Association of Teachers of Singing. With her generosity, she celebrated the benefits she received from her very first NATS conference. She believed that her association with NATS gave her courage, assurance, and community in a way that nothing else could.

Joan spoke modestly of herself as "the old lady on Glendale Street who teaches singing." To us, Joan Frey Boytim was much more. She was the beating heart of our profession, the singing bird who insisted on beautiful accuracy, and the devoted friend of lifelong singers. I treasure our time together and recall the phrase she and Jim invented regarding life and work: "Aspire to inspire until you expire!" She embodied those words like no one else. May we keep always her memory close and her example vivid in our lives.

Norman Spivey

I feel like I owe a lot to Joan. I met her in 1992, just a few months after I moved to Pennsylvania, at our NATS Allegheny Mountain chapter fall meeting. There were just a handful of us in attendance, and they were looking for someone to step up and serve in leadership. I knew I wanted to give back to the association at some point, and it was Joan who encouraged me to stand for election as chapter president. Who knows if I would have gone on to have the same profile of NATS service without her early encouragement. From that moment on, I knew Joan was a force of nature.

There were memorable visits to Joan and Jim's house, casual lunches in their hometown of Carlisle, drafts of forthcoming anthologies to review, and hours spent observing her teaching during my first sabbatical. During these years, she developed a presentation on "Marketing and Management of the Voice Studio" (a precursor to her impactful *The Private Voice Studio Handbook*).[25] I was delighted to invite her to give the presentation at Penn State for the 1997 NATS Intern Program we hosted there.

Those of us who were lucky enough to be on Joan's holiday card list remember her custom artwork and newsy letters about the activities of the year—particularly the bounty of her prized garden. I was always grateful she included copies of her studio recitals in my card. Joan was fiercely proud and interested in her students and found ways to brag on them in the very best way. She also loved following the journeys of former students. A number of them matriculated to Penn State, and, without ever hovering, she was always keen to know how they might be blooming along their path. Joan's students loved her too. To see the outpouring at her celebration of life service was quite amazing. One former student who spoke during the event asked those who had studied with Joan to stand . . . the throng that rose up showed the incredible scope of her impact.[26]

Joan was also great at reminding us of the best parts of our mission. In my treasured copy of *The Private Studio Handbook*, which she warmly inscribed, I'm mindful of the "Pick-Me-Ups and Parting Thoughts" chapter. Near the end of it, she observes the following:

> When people come to us for voice lessons, most of the time they get much more for their money. Sometimes it is confidence, sometimes it is a new artistic outlet, sometimes it is a re-affirmation of youth, sometimes it is in the finding of someone who cares enough to trust in them, and sometimes it is personal encouragement. The side effects . . . can be enormous.[27]

And with final phrases of the book she goes on to remind us why we do what we do:

> Not because we expect you to major in music, not because we expect you to play or sing all your life. . . . Not so you can have fun, but so you will be human, So you will recognize beauty, So you will be sensitive. . . . So you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good—in short, more life. . . . That is why we teach music.[28]

Indeed. Thank you, Joan.

Melinda Steffy

I remember when I first started voice lessons how impossible it felt to sing a smooth, legato line. I was fifteen and just learning to control my instrument. "Connect!," Mrs. Boytim would interject at every inadvertent "h" between notes; "Support!" She started every voice lesson with the same four warm-up exercises: a one-octave arpeggio, an octave jump, a scale up and arpeggio down, and a two-octave arpeggio repeated twice. For three years, the same four exercises. We would often spend half of a lesson on warm-ups and technical exercises before moving on to actual songs. I continued to hear "Connect!" and "Support!" at each lesson and I remember a faint sense of despair that I might never master connecting the notes.

And then, over time, I did. I realized as time went on how strategic those four exercises were. Through them, Mrs. Boytim taught me breath management, vowel placement, control across registers, how to shape a line, and how to understand my own voice. She approached warm-ups with the sternness of high expectations and responded with a twinkle of pride when expectations were met. I still use these exercises now, incorporating them into warm-ups for the cooperative chamber choir I've been singing with for the past thirteen years. Mrs. Boytim's warm-ups were not merely preparation for a future lesson or singing yet to come: They *were* the lesson, and they *were* the singing.

Laura Choi Stewart

I first knew Joan Boytim not as a singing teacher, but as a member of my childhood church, the one to which my parents still belong and where I began singing in the children's choir. When I was thirteen years old and nervous about high school show choir auditions, my mother sent me to Joan because she was the person we knew who taught voice lessons. It never occurred to me until the end of high school, when I visited Tower Records in New York City and saw an entire wall displaying Joan's "First Book of Solos" collection that Joan was "somebody."[29] I suppose I assumed every young singer had a Joan. How wrong—and *lucky*—I was!

I cannot think about Joan without thinking about integrity. Certainly, Joan modeled moral integrity, but she also applied the concept to singing; she truly believed that there was a right (and wrong) way to sing. This approach felt old-school, even thirty years ago, but the clarity and authority of Joan's teaching was enormously reassuring to me as a young singer. Her directions were clear, the concepts were simple, and mastery of those straightforward technical principles would allow me to approach even the most sophisticated repertoire. Indeed, as I have progressed through my professional career, I have learned many subtleties and additions to what I knew when I left for college, but I have never learned anything that has proved her to be wrong.

Joan also modeled the other sense of integrity: the integration of parts into a seamless whole. As much as she loved her vocation, she always saw teaching as only one part of a full life and encouraged me to do the same. When it became clear my performing career was not headed toward international stardom, Joan assured me that a regional career was the best possible outcome, as it would allow me to teach and to be present for my family. A musical life that was grounded in strong community ties, the cultivation of varied interests, and real relationships at home was Joan's idea of success. And, like her views on technique, her beliefs were both old-fashioned and, ultimately, true.

Cynthia Vaughn

Joan Frey Boytim and I met in the 1980s when I was a young voice teacher and new NATS member. Most of the NATS members I knew at the time were college professors, but I was drawn to Mrs. Boytim ("call me Joan," she would say) because she was an outstanding advocate for "private" voice teachers. Over the forty years, we had many memorable chats at NATS conferences and workshops, and shared a few phone calls, cards, and letters. Joan had a memory for names, and at each conference, I could count on hearing a cheery "Hellooooo, Cynthia!"

across a crowded hall—followed by a quick hug. I probably only shared a few words with her beloved husband Jim over the years, but he was always there with her. Jim was immensely proud of Joan and loved seeing her in the limelight. That's the lasting image I have: Joan in one of her colorful, flowing caftans, greeting her many fans while Jim looked on with pride. I was lucky to be there in person in 2016 as Joan was honored with the NATS Lifetime Achievement Award.[30] In addition to receiving the award, she gave an empowering speech. She closed with her motto: "Aspire to inspire until you expire."[31]

The last time I spoke with Joan was during the pandemic in 2020. I phoned her because I knew that she did not use email, and I worried about how she was coping during the isolation. She shared with me that she had been spending her long days going through boxes of cards, letters, and thank-you notes from former students, colleagues, and worldwide fans of her song anthologies. She read several of the letters aloud to me. They were all beautiful tributes to a beloved teacher, friend, and hero.

I started my first independent voice studio in my home after I graduated with my bachelor's degree in vocal performance in 1979. I met Joan a few years later, and I had plenty of questions for her. Some of her answers to everyone's frequent questions were printed in her first edition of *The Private Voice Studio Handbook: A Practical Guide to All Aspects of Teaching*.[32] Most of my students at the time were teenagers and I was an eager early adopter of Joan's "First Book of Solos" anthology series.[33] Over the decades, I owned most of Joan's sixty-plus publications.[34] Her song anthologies remain a staple in most voice studios to this day. In addition to being an excellent teacher, Joan was a savvy business woman. She revealed to me she received a flat fee for the original "First Book of Solos" series, but the songbooks were so successful she decided to negotiate royalties for all future anthologies. "Tell your friends to buy the First Books . . . Part II and later" she said, with a wink and a smile.

In 2000, when I was a contributing editor for *Classical Singer* magazine, I interviewed Joan by phone for an article titled "So You Want to Teach Singing?—Tips for Starting Your Own Voice Studio" that is still available in the online archives.[35] At the time, Joan was writing a regular column, A Private View, for NATS's *Inter Nos* newsletter in which she encouraged aspiring voice teachers to begin by writing a mission statement. In our *Classical Singer* interview, she remarked that her home studio in Pennsylvania had averaged sixty students a week for decades, but that she had recently cut back to forty weekly students (from eleven school districts):

> There is great demand for private voice teachers for junior high and high school students. . . . If you look at the demographics for the next 20 years . . . there is a proliferation of teenagers. As public schools cut back on arts education, parents and teens are looking for private teachers to fill that gap. All high schools do musicals these days, and the kids know that if they want the lead or they want to beat out 200 singers for District Chorus, they have to have private singing lessons. It's a huge market.[36]

Joan's words are just as true, twenty-five years later. Her generous commitment to helping young teachers has never wavered. Beginning in 2015, she initiated the NATS Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers.[37] Fifteen one thousand–dollar awards—one each for a member applicant from each NATS region—provides financial assistance for those independent teachers to attend a NATS national conference. Joan Frey Boytim's contributions to our field are a lasting legacy for this generation and the future. I am honored to have known her as a friend and colleague.

BIOGRAPHIES OF BOYTIM'S STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES

Elizabeth Lins Aragunde is assistant professor of music at Shippensburg University, where she directs the choirs and teaches classes in voice, opera, musical theater, and music history. Under her direction, the choirs at Shippensburg have toured to international acclaim, and in 2023, while in Lithuania, the choir was invited to perform on national television for *Good Morning, Lithuania*. Additionally, Aragunde is contributing faculty in voice at Dickinson College and maintains a diverse private studio. She is the former director of the Susquehanna Young Women's Chorale and is in demand as a choral clinician, guest conductor, and adjudicator. Since making her professional debut at the age of twenty with the Harrisburg Opera, she continues to be a frequent soloist with orchestras and ensembles throughout the Northeast. Aragunde earned degrees in music education, classical vocal performance, and pedagogy from Messiah University, the Pennsylvania State University, and Shenandoah Conservatory, respectively.

Michelle Duggan, an attorney who minored in vocal music in college, studied with Joan Frey Boytim as an adult student. Her daughters, **Mallory** and **Marissa**, also studied with Boytim throughout middle and high school before they attended

Gettysburg College, where they continued study as voice minors under Susan Hochmiller and Jeffrey Fahnestock—also two former Boytim students. After college, Mallory obtained a master's degree in biomedical science; she is currently in her second year of medical school. Marissa graduated from college in December 2024, obtaining a master's degree in biomedical sciences and will be attending medical school in July 2026. Michelle's youngest daughter, **Marabeth**, a high school senior, was Boytim's final student. Boytim taught Marabeth until the last year and a half of her life. Marabeth is privileged to now study with another former Boytim student, Elizabeth Aragunde. All four Duggans still actively sing in church and with the Carlisle Musical Arts Club.

Since 1997, tenor **Jeffrey Fahnestock** has been an adjunct assistant professor of music at Gettysburg College, where he has taught applied lessons, diction, vocal repertoire, and opera survey. He recently retired after thirty years from Susquehanna University, where he taught applied lessons, vocal literature, opera workshop, and conducted a choral group. Fahnestock continues to serve as codirector of Susquehanna University's GO-Japan (Global Opportunities) Program, a chamber music residency at Niigata University. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the Peabody Conservatory. Fahnestock was awarded fellowships for the study of art song and opera at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Ravinia Festival's Steans Institute, and the Kent Blossom Music Festival. Acclaimed as "an outstanding singer with a very well-produced leading tenor voice" by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper in Munich, Fahnestock has performed a wide repertoire across the United States and in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan. He has been a soloist with the Folger Consort, Washington Bach Consort, Rochester Bach Festival, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Lancaster Symphony, and at the Aspen Music Festival.

Doug Heineman is a graduate of Penn State Capitol Campus (now Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg—Capital College), where he majored in business management. He spent his career in real estate, both as an agent and appraiser. With the exception of his years in military service, he has lived his entire life in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he has devoted much time to community service and served as president of the Carlisle Society of Realtors. Heinemann also has spent much of his life singing in choral groups, including the Great Lakes Bluejacket Choir and in a variety of community and church choirs. He credits his lifelong love of choral music to his high school choral teacher, Joan Frey Boytim.

Susan Hochmiller is associate professor and coordinator of voice at the Sunderman Conservatory at Gettysburg College. She is an avid recitalist and has performed chamber music in Italy and across the United States. She holds a BM in vocal performance from Susquehanna University and an MM and DMA in vocal performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music. An active member of NATS since 2007, Hochmiller served as president of the Allegheny Mountain Chapter from 2016 to 2019 and participated in the 2012 NATS Intern Program. From 2013 to 2023, she served as director of Orvieto Musica's "Art of Song" summer vocal chamber music festival in Orvieto, Italy. Hochmiller is the author of *So You Want to Sing Chamber Music: A Guide for Professionals* and released *Art Songs and Duets by Women Composers from the Classical and Early Romantic Eras* with Centaur Records.

Soprano **Christina Kay** enjoys a multifaceted career as an artist, educator, and arts administrator. Her passion for enlivening Renaissance and baroque music with ornamentation and improvisation led her to cofound Filigree Ensemble in 2022. She has had the pleasure of performing Handel's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall with the Masterwork Chorus and has performed as both a soloist and chorister with many respected ensembles, including ARTEK Early Music, True Concord, the American Classical Orchestra, the Cathedral Choir of St. John the Divine, the Handel and Haydn Society, the New York Virtuoso Singers, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and the Western Wind. In addition to an active performance schedule, Kay serves as music development director at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City, where she leads fundraising efforts for the music program. She has taught voice and piano lessons for over a decade, privately coaches baroque singing style, and as enjoyed facilitating adult summer choral workshops with the Western Wind.

Larry Loh is music director of the Waco Symphony Orchestra, a position he began in the spring of 2024. Previous conducting positions include the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic. He has recently appeared as a guest conductor with the Cleveland Orchestra, Florida Orchestras, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Grant Park Music Festival, and the Boston Pops. He and his wife Jennifer have two children in college, Charlie and Hilary, and an adorable dog named Coco. Off the podium, Loh is a pianist, clarinetist, and a tenor. He grew up in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Hannah O'Donnell is a registered nurse currently working in oncology research at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. She attended Messiah College, where she took a break from singing to be part of the handbell choir. After graduating with her BS in nursing, she worked as a registered nurse at the Penn State Cancer Institute inpatient unit and the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center emergency department. O'Donnell first became acquainted with Joan Boytim through her mother, who was a member of her studio in high school. Since graduating from college, O'Donnell has sung with several community and church choirs including the Mechanicsburg Ecumenical Choir and the choir of Saint Patrick Church in Carlisle. When not otherwise engaged, she spends her time reading, playing guitar, and enjoying nature.

Julie Richwine began taking voice lessons from Joan Boytim when she was a junior in high school, eventually becoming one of her adult students. Although she did not pursue a musical career, thanks to Joan singing has remained an important part of her life. Richwine sings in two local choral groups and has participated in the Carlisle community's production of Handel's *Messiah* for over twenty-five years. She also has sung at weddings and in small musical theater productions with Carlisle Summerfair. She now sings for her own enjoyment. Now a mother and grandmother, Richwine currently works as a mammographer with a local health system. She loves spending time with family and continues to enjoy music and singing on a daily basis.

Brenda Smith teaches studio voice, diction, and voice pedagogy at the University of Florida. She is the author of *Diction in Context: Singing in English, Italian, German and* French, *So You Want to Sing for a Lifetime: A Guide for Performers*, and the coauthor (with Ronald Burrichter) of *Class Voice: Fundamental Skills for Lifelong Singing*. She has also collaborated with Robert T. Sataloff on a variety of projects to promote vocal health through choral singing including *Choral Pedagogy* (now in its third edition) and *Choral Pedagogy and the Older Singer*. Smith serves as chair of the NATS Books publishing initiative with Bloomsbury Academic and on the editorial board of the *Journal of Voice*. She is the 2000 recipient of the Van L. Lawrence Fellowship, awarded jointly by the Voice Foundation and NATS. From 1983 to 1993 she taught at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where she worked regularly with Joan Boytim.

Norman Spivey is professor of voice and voice pedagogy at Penn State University. An active member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, he has served the organization at every level—from chapter officer to national president. He participated in the NATS Intern Program as an intern, a local coordinator, a master teacher, and the national director, and his writings on teacher development and musical theater pedagogy have appeared in the *Journal of Singing*. Spivey was awarded the 2003 Van L. Lawrence Fellowship by NATS and the Voice Foundation and the 2012 Penn State College of Arts and Architecture Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching. With longtime collaborator Mary Saunders Barton, he coauthored the *Cross-Training in the Voice Studio: A Balancing Act*, published by Plural in 2018. He is a member of the American Academy of Teachers of Singing.

Melinda Steffy is a visual artist, musician, and nonprofit leader based in Philadelphia. She currently serves as coexecutive director of CultureWorks Greater Philadelphia, which offers an alternative approach to nonprofit management for artists, cultural leaders, and social entrepreneurs. She is also the founder and principal of Concentric Strategy, which provides strategy and communications consulting for nonprofit organizations. In addition, Steffy maintains an active art studio practice with exhibitions at Tiger Strikes Asteroid, InLiquid, and Rowan University, and many other venues. Since 2012, she has been a member of the Chestnut Street Singers, a cooperative chamber choir in Philadelphia, where (in addition to singing alto 2) she has held a variety of roles from board member to warm-up leader to conductor. Steffy holds an MFA in painting from the University of the Arts and a BA in religious studies from Eastern Mennonite University. She studied voice with Joan Boytim from 1996 to 1999.

Soprano **Laura Choi Stuart** enjoys a full life in music in concert, opera, and art song repertoire. Recent highlights include Mozart's *Requiem* with Washington National Cathedral and Washington Bach Consort, Handel's *Messiah* at Washington National Cathedral, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* with Handel Society of Baltimore, and Ravel's *Shéhérezade* with the Epiphany Festival. Frequent recital appearances include works of Boulanger, Bolcom, Hahn, and Ives. Laura is also a dedicated teacher, serving as head of vocal studies at the Washington National Cathedral, running a private voice studio, and curating "The Weekly Warm-Up," a thriving YouTube channel offering "clear (fun) voice education" for adult choral singers. Laura is a former spelling bee champion and current member of three book clubs. She spends her leisure hours at home with family in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Cynthia Vaughn is a respected voice teacher, author, and presenter. She is best known as coauthor (with Meribeth Dayme) of *The Singing Book*, the leading group-voice textbook/song anthology for beginning and intermediate singers. The new fourth edition of *The Singing Book* (edited by Matthew Hoch) was published by Rowman & Littlefield (now Bloomsbury) through the "NATS Books" publishing initiative. Additionally, Vaughn and Hoch edited and compiled *The Essentials of CoreSinging: A Joyful Approach to Singing and Voice Pedagogy* by Meribeth Dayme (1938–2019). She has maintained an independent voice studio since the 1980s and was on the voice faculty of Colorado State University from 1999 to 2008. Previously, Vaughn was a writer and assistant editor for *Classical Singer* magazine. An advocate for independent voice teachers, she was for many years the associate editor of the Independent Voices column and contributed articles for *Inter Nos*, NATS's semiannual member publication.

NOTES

1. "NATS Honors Joan Boytim and Virginia Zeani with Lifetime Achievement Award," National Association of Teachers of Singing, September 15, 2016, https://www.nats.org/cgi/page.cgi/_article.html/What_s_New/NATS_Honors_Joan_Boytim_and_Virginia_Zeani_with_Lifetime_Achievement_Award.
2. "NATS Presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Boytim," posted September 16, 2016, by OfficialNATS, YouTube, 27 min., 53 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGsJG5jHV9c, 0:40.
3. Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Soprano Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1991); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Mezzo-Soprano/Alto Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1991); Joan Frey

Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Tenor Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1991); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Baritone/Bass Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1991); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The Second Book of Soprano Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1993); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The Second Book of Mezzo-Soprano/Alto Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1994); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The Second Book of Tenor Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1994); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The Second Book of Baritone/Bass Solos* (G. Schirmer, 1994); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Soprano Solos—Part II* (G. Schirmer, 2000); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Mezzo-Soprano/Alto Solos—Part II* (G. Schirmer, 2000); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Tenor Solos—Part II* (G. Schirmer, 2000); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Baritone/Bass Solos—Part II* (G. Schirmer, 2000); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Easy Songs for the Beginning Soprano* (G. 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Schirmer, 2000); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Christmas Solos for All Ages—High Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Christmas Solos for All Ages—Medium Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Christmas Solos for All Ages—Low Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos: 24 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Soprano* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos: 22 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Mezzo-Soprano/Alto* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos: 23 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Tenor* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos: 23 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Baritone* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos—Part II: 22 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Soprano* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos—Part II: 24 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Mezzo-Soprano/Alto* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos—Part II: 23 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Tenor* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Broadway Solos—Part II: 24 Classic Theatre Songs for Vocal Study—Baritone* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *36 Solos for Young Singers* (Hal Leonard, 2001); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Sacred Solos for All Ages: 43 Solos for Classical Singers—High Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2002); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Sacred Solos for All Ages: 43 Solos for Classical Singers—Medium Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2002); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Sacred Solos for All Ages: 43 Solos for Classical Singers—Low Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2002); Joan Frey Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook: A Practical Guide to All Aspects of Teaching* (Hal Leonard, 2003); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Daffodils, Violets & Snowflakes: 24 Classical Songs for Young Women Ages Ten to Mid-Teens—High Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2003); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *Daffodils, Violets & Snowflakes: 24 Classical Songs for Young Women Ages Ten to Mid-Teens—Low Voice* (Hal Leonard, 2003); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The Second Book of Soprano Solos—Part II* (G. 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Schirmer, 2013); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Mezzo-Soprano/Alto Solos—Complete Parts I, II, and III* (G. Schirmer, 2013); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Tenor Solos—Complete Parts I, II, and III* (G. Schirmer, 2013); Joan Frey Boytim, comp., *The First Book of Baritone/Bass Solos—Complete Parts I, II, and III* (G. Schirmer, 2013); Joan Frey Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook: A Practical Guide to All Aspects of Teaching*, rev. ed. (Hal Leonard, 2014); John Frey Boytim, comp., *Introduction to Art Song: Songs in English for Classical Voice Students—Soprano* (G. Schirmer, 2016); John Frey Boytim, comp., *Introduction to Art Song: Songs in English for Classical*

Voice Students—Mezzo-Soprano/Alto (G. Schirmer, 2016); John Frey Boytim, comp., *Introduction to Art Song: Songs in English for Classical Voice Students—Tenor* (G. Schirmer, 2016); John Frey Boytim, comp., *Introduction to Art Song: Songs in English for Classical Voice Students—Baritone/Bass* (G. Schirmer, 2016). *Note*: The twelve "First Books" were republished as four anthologies in 2013; the content is identical to that published the original volumes (1991, 2000, and 2004). Prior to the sixty anthologies with Schirmer and Hal Leonard she published through NATS two incarnations of an annotated bibliography: Joan Frey Boytim, ed., *Solo Vocal Repertoire for Young* (National Association of Teachers of Singing, 1980); Joan Frey Boytim, ed., *Solo Vocal Repertoire for Young Singers: An Annotated Bibliography* (National Association of Teachers of Singing, 1982).

4. "NATS Presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Boytim," 25:13.
5. Matthew Hoch, "Remembering Barbara Doscher: Reflections from Her Students and Colleagues," *Journal of Singing* 80, no. 3 (2024): 297–310, https://doi.org/10.53830/sing.00005; Matthew Hoch, "Remembering Barbara Honn: Reflections from Her Students and Colleagues," *Journal of Singing* 81, no. 3 (January/February 2025): 295–309, https://doi.org/10.53830/sing.00096.
6. "Carlisle Vocal Teacher Who Literally Helped Keep America Singing Dies at 91," *Penn Live Patriot-News*, December 24, 2024, https://www.pennlive.com/news/2024/12/carlisle-vocal-teacher-who-literally-helped-keep-america-singing-passes-at-90.html.
7. "Celebrating the Life of Joan Frey Boytim—February 22, 2025," posted February 22, 2025, by Carlisle United Methodist Church, YouTube, 2 hr., 25 min., 30 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAgOOwSnMCc.
8. See endnote 3.
9. "Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers," National Association of Teachers of Singing, accessed August 31, 2025, https://www.nats.org/independent-teacher-fellowship.html#.
10. "NATS Presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Boytim," 12:29.
11. "NATS Presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Boytim," 24:01.
12. "Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers"; "Annual Scholarships, " Carlisle Musical Arts Club, accessed August 30, 2024, https://carlislemusicalartsclub.com/scholarships.html.
13. Paraphrase of "With a Song in My Heart," in *The First Book of Broadway Solos—Soprano*. See endnote 3.
14. Paraphrase of "How Can I Keep from Singing?," in *Easy Songs for the Beginning Tenor—Part II*. See endnote 3.
15. Susan Hochmiller, *So You Want to Sing Chamber Music: A Guide for Performers* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).
16. "Song of Love," in *Easy Songs for the Beginning Soprano—Part II*; see endnote 3.
17. See endnote 3.
18. "April Showers," in *Easy Songs for the Beginning Soprano*; "Wake Up," in *Easy Songs for the Beginning Soprano—Part II*; see endnote 3.
19. See endnote 3.
20. Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook* (rev. 2014), 117–23; "NATS Presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Boytim," 1:43.
21. "NATS Honors Joan Boytim and Virginia Zeani with Lifetime Achievement Award."
22. Paraphrase of "My Heart Is like a Singing Bird," in *The Second Book of Soprano Solos*; see endnote 3.
23. See endnote 4.
24. Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook* (2003, rev. 2014).
25. Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook* (2003, rev. 2014).
26. "Celebrating the Life of Joan Frey Boytim," 127:14.
27. Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook* (rev. 2014), 134.
28. Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook* (rev. 2014), 134.
29. See endnote 3.
30. "NATS Honors Joan Boytim and Virginia Zeani with Lifetime Achievement Award."
31. "NATS Presents Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Boytim," 26:41.
32. Boytim, *The Private Voice Studio Handbook* (2003, rev. 2014).
33. See endnote 3.
34. See endnote 3.
35. Cynthia Vaughn, "So You Want to Teach Singing? Tips for Starting Your Own Studio," *Classical Singer* 13, no. 2 (2000): 20–2; also available online: Cynthia Vaughn, "So You Want to Teach Singing?," *CS Music*, February 1, 2000, https://www.csmusic.net/content/articles/so-you-want-to-teach-singing/.
36. Vaughn, "So You Want to Teach Singing," 20.
37. "Joan Frey Boytim Awards for Independent Teachers."

Matthew Hoch's bio appears on page 272.